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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001133

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AF/SPG, AND
NEA A/S WELCH
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [SU](#) [SA](#) [UN](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR: MINAWI DESCRIBES SAUDI TRIP, PREVIEWS TRIP
TO DARFUR

REF: A. KHARTOUM 00832

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 00951

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 98121

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (S) Buoyant after his recent trip to Saudi Arabia, Senior Assistant to the President and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi described his visit to Jeddah--which had included a rare 40-minute private meeting with King Abdullah and promises of financial support for the SLM--as "very positive." Minawi also met with the Foreign Minister, the Interior Minister, and representatives of the Islamic Development Bank and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. He previewed a trip with President Bashir to Darfur from July 21-24, which Post anticipates will concentrate on reconstruction and development in the region. In addition, Minawi warned of the difficulties facing the UN/AU's proposed meeting for rebel factions in Arusha on August 3-5. See para. 10 regarding Post's request for additional guidance on the U.S. role in facilitating Saudi support for the SLM. End summary.

Minawi's "Magic" Earns Rare Meeting with King

[1](#)2. (S) After a successful trip to Saudi Arabia that included a 40-minute private meeting with King Abdullah, Senior Assistant to the President and SLM leader Minni Minawi returned to Khartoum for one night before joining President Bashir and key cabinet ministers on a three-day tour of Darfur. Briefing Poloff on July 20, Minawi characterized his trip to Saudi Arabia as "very positive" and recalled that Sudan's Ambassador to the Kingdom had remarked, "What kind of 'faqih' (tribal magic) do you have to spend so long with the King? Even President Bashir does not get that kind of meeting." Minawi's four-day visit to the Kingdom included meetings with Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal, Interior Minister Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Mecca Governor Khalid Al Faisal, and representatives of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

[1](#)3. (S) Describing King Abdullah as "very wise," Minawi had

presented him with a "private letter" to request financial support to maintain the loyalty of his forces, integrate SLM fighters into the civilian population, and treat the injured.

King Abdullah had given a positive response to the provision of direct assistance to the SLM rather than through the Sudanese Government, said Minawi. King Abdullah had instructed FM Al Faisal to examine Minawi's request in detail and report back to the Royal Diwan with proposals for the necessary royal decrees.

¶4. (S) Expressing concern about Sudan's worsening international reputation because of Darfur, King Abdullah had asked Minawi to tell President Bashir not to "fight" with the international community, a message the King promised to re-inforce personally. (Note: Minawi interpreted this remark as a message to the Sudanese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, who was present at the beginning of the meeting. End note.) King Abdullah had also suggested an international conference on Darfur to ease the relationship between Sudan and the West. While Minawi had noted that the National Congress Party (NCP) was considering an Arab League conference on Darfur, King Abdullah had rejected this proposal. King Abdullah then agreed with Minawi's analysis that Sudan was a victim of its own policies, not of the international community.

Naif "Unstable"

¶5. (S) Minawi's subsequent meeting with Interior Minister Naif had included little discussion of Darfur. He described the conversation as disjointed and Naif as "not stable." While acknowledging that the Saudi legal system was based on Islamic law, Naif had criticized the Sudanese Government's

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use of Islam to maintain power. Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia and Sudan had overcome bilateral tensions of past years and now cooperated on counter-terrorism. Naif had told Minawi that terrorism was "spoiling" Arab countries and claimed that Saudi Arabia had prevented 187 terror plots in "recent" years. He had further warned that Iran was attempting to "dominate" the Gulf and blamed Pakistan for the drug trade in the Arabian peninsula.

IDB Should Provide Darfur Funds Through TDRA

¶6. (C) By contrast, Minawi said that his meeting at the Islamic Development Bank was productive. He had explained that the 11 million dollars allocated by the IDB for Darfur had never reached the intended recipients and suggested that it consider alternate methods for distributing the funds, such as through the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA). IDB representatives had responded positively to this recommendation, and the chairmen of the TDRA Land Commission and the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund, who were traveling with Minawi, conducted additional meetings with IDB staff. Providing few details, Minawi said that his meetings with FM Al Faisal, Governor Khalid Al Faisal, and the OIC were equally useful.

Bashir, Ministers Visit Darfur

¶7. (C) Minawi said that he was scheduled to accompany President Bashir and several high-level officials of the Government of National Unity (GNU) to Darfur from July 21 to July 24. The delegation would include National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director General Salah Ghosh, Interior Minister Al Zubeir Bashir Taha, Minister of Presidential Affairs Bakri Hassan Salih, Minister of Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor, and eight others. They planned to visit

the three Darfur state capitals. (Comment: Post anticipates that Bashir will use the trip to underscore the need for reconstruction and development in Darfur. Many international humanitarian organizations oppose reconstruction and development at this time because of continuing insecurity and the presence of non-resident tribes in areas previously occupied by the internally displaced, although it is a frequent request from Darfuris across the board, including IDPs. End comment.) Minawi said that he planned to remain in Darfur for an additional week to address the SLM's internal problems and recent acts of banditry committed by fighters associated with the movement. He also hoped to prepare for a conference of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) stakeholders to increase stability in the region (Ref. A).

Warnings for the UN/AU Political Process

¶8. (C) The UN/AU meeting of DPA non-signatories planned for Arusha from August 3 to 5 risks failure, warned Minawi. "No one has any principles now," he said, referring to the political leaders rumored to be invited to the meeting, "so they can't unite." He also cautioned that the presence of Eritrean officials would have a negative influence on the meeting because they would "coach" the rebel movements. Minawi confidant Ali Trayo added that the presence of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Arusha could also be destructive. JEM was better organized than the other movements--which did not have clear positions--and could "overtake" them. "It will be a good opportunity for JEM to influence all the fragmented forces," said Trayo. He added that fostering greater cohesion within the remnants of the SLM prior to Arusha, such as through the meeting proposed by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), could prevent JEM dominance.

¶9. (C) Minawi said that two groups associated with JEM and three armed factions that had defected from the SLM in the last year had contacted him in recent days to join the SLM. "Should I send these guys to Arusha?" Minawi asked. Poloff said that Minawi should be in closer contact with the UN/AU both on this issue and to provide insight into the political process. He suggested that Minawi appoint an SLM liaison to the staff of UN Envoy Jan Eliasson and AU Envoy Salim Ahmed

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Salim.

Action Request

¶10. (S) Minawi attributes the success of his meeting with King Abdullah to USG efforts to preview the trip for the Saudi Government (Refs. B and C). He requested that the USG help him to follow-up on his requests for financial support. Minawi plans to send a "thank you" letter to King Abdullah and to continue to communicate with the Saudis through their embassy in Khartoum. Post requests that the Department provide guidance on the U.S. role in this possible tripartite but highly sensitive relationship. CDA Fernandez has already met with and established a positive relationship with the newly arrived Saudi Ambassador.
FERNANDEZ